

NEO-NAZI AND NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS IN WEST GERMANY

A Follow-Up Survey to the
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE's
Report of September, 1951
"The Recent Growth of
Neo-Nazism in Europe"

Indexed

NEO-NAZI AND NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS IN WEST GERMANY

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

**386 Fourth Avenue
New York 16, N. Y.**

May, 1952

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. <i>Has Democracy Failed in Post-War Germany?</i>	1
2. <i>A New Nazi Philosophy Is Shaped</i>	8
3. <i>The Strength of Neo-Nazi Ideas in Germany Today</i>	17
4. <i>The Return of the Military Men</i>	20
5. <i>Democratic Counter-Action</i>	32



1. Has Democracy Failed in Post-War Germany?

Whether post-war Germany will become a truly democratic state or will revert to nazism and aggressive militarism is one of the crucial questions of our times. Developments in Germany, though overshadowed for the moment by more spectacular aspects of the East-West conflict, merit the attention of democratic forces everywhere; for events which foreshadow a possible return to a Hitlerian Reich or a "Blood and Iron" Germany must give rise to special concern.

In September, 1951, the American Jewish Committee published a report, based on data gathered by its Paris Office, on the *Recent Growth of Neo-Nazism in Europe*, the major part of which dealt with the neo-nazi movement in Germany. In February, 1952, the *9th Quarterly Report on Germany* issued by Mr. John J. McCloy, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, corroborated the conclusions of the AJC survey on the strength of neo-nazism in that country. Here are some of the major conclusions set forth in both reports:

The AJC report stated: "The problem posed by the [neo-nazi] Socialist Reich Party and its hard core of cohorts is aggravated by the evident willingness of the other more respectable parties to seek votes on much the same extreme nationalist basis that marked the SRP campaign." It then went on to name the extreme nationalist elements in other parties, including some in the present Bonn coalition government.

Mr. McCloy's report stated: "Unhappily, most of the established political parties have also been stocking the merchandise of nationalism. Individuals or circles . . . have expressed highly nationalist sentiments, either out of conviction or as a vote-getting device. Even some Federal Ministers have not been above such actions."

The AJC survey quoted directly from speeches of SRP leaders to show their disdain for democracy, their desire to have Germany assure its "biological preservation" by keeping clear of the East-West conflict, and the anti-American elements of their program.

The High Commissioner asserted: "Basically, however, they [neo-nazis] are in accord in . . . their contempt for democracy . . . and their desire

for Germany to play the role of a bystander in the East-West struggle, doing nothing to help defend herself from the menace of another totalitarianism."

Finally, the AJC report concluded that: ". . . it is not the size of the German nationalist organizations that is important — more important is their viability. Experience during the past years indicates that the post-war nationalism grafted onto previous growths has found a favorable climate in Germany. Its existence means that, given the proper psychological moment, it can suddenly expand and seize power."

The U.S. High Commissioner affirmed: "The danger on the extreme right is not of a critical nature and — at least in the form of the SRP — does not constitute an immediate threat to the Federal Republic, but there is a *potential danger* [italics ours-AJC] whose nature and importance warrant continued vigilance by all who value democratic principles. The SRP organizational nuclei, which are dotted all over the country, might at a later date expand and grow should the political climate become suitable for their development."

The events which prompted the American Jewish Committee survey, such as the success of the Socialist Reich Party in the Lower Saxony elections, occurred just about a year ago. What are the new and significant neo-nazi and nationalist trends in Germany that have developed since that time?

The current report deals with the following outstanding developments:

1. There is an ongoing, systematic attempt to develop a neo-nazi philosophy palatable to German public opinion and able to serve as a lever for a neo-nazi rise to power. One of the publications attempting to do this is a monthly magazine, Nation Europa. It is analyzed here in some detail because it is one of the most characteristic expressions of neo-nazi ideology; the major themes come through despite the vagueness and mysticism that are a hallmark of neo-nazi writing. Furthermore, it appears to be virtually an official organ for the international neo-nazi movement.

2. This report deals with the receptivity of West Germany to neo-nazi ideas. The results of significant public opinion polls taken by the U.S. High Commissioner's Office during the past year are brought together and analyzed from this point of view. Subjects dealt with in these polls include:

- the German attitude as to whether nazism was good or bad;
- the German attitude toward the question of war guilt;
- the number of Germans who would resist the return of a nazi regime, and the number who would favor it; and
- the strength of anti-Semitism in West Germany.



3. A new phenomenon is making itself felt as a major force on the German scene — the veterans' organizations. The report describes the gradual re-emergence of military men as a factor in Germany, primarily through the formation of veterans' groups, outlines the objectives they have already accomplished, and delineates their present aims and activities.

4. The actions of the German government against the neo-nazi parties is discussed, as is the effectiveness of certain liberal and democratic German elements that came to the fore in an interesting and instructive test case of German public sentiment, known in Germany as the Veit Harlan affair.

Investigation of these several developments, taken together with the appearance last May of a strong neo-nazi party, reveal certain serious dangers which are extremely disquieting to those who hope for democracy in Germany. Nationalist sentiments and attitudes which, two years ago, were prevalent only among small segments of the German population, have now become widespread. There is no significant difference, today, between the neo-nazi attitude on the issues of war crimes and of war guilt and the attitude of the majority of the German population on these subjects. There is a sizeable, hard minority which openly seeks the return of the nazis, while the great bulk of the population declares that it would do nothing to oppose such a nazi drive to power.

The veterans' groups which have been springing up and which are now seeking to unite already have a large membership. If they can attract anywhere near their potential membership they will be the second largest mass organization in the Federal Republic. Still malleable, still undecided whether, essentially, they will espouse only veterans' welfare needs (some of which are inextricably interwoven with a political position), or whether they will turn to an active political role, the future of this group gives cause for vigilance and anxiety. The leadership of the veterans' groups is composed primarily of generals and other high officers, and they may easily become a simple transmission belt for noxious, old-time German Army ideals and ambitions. Former members of the Hitler SS are joining veterans' groups in growing numbers, and are playing an important role. They bring with them the worst of nazi-like thinking and sympathies. And a great many veterans' groups have been sympathetic to the kind of international politics sponsored by neo-nazi groups that hide behind a "united Europe" theme.

One must also recognize the fact that — desirable though it may be for other reasons — the drive to re-militarize Germany has given the military and neo-nazi groups a strong impetus. The latter, indeed, make much politi-

cal capital of the slogan, "Hitler was right and the West was wrong on the Soviets." The German ex-generals and military men are much sought after, and they feel that they can lay down what they consider essential conditions for their cooperation. Of late, military men and veterans' groups that once sponsored an *Ohne Mich* (without Me) stand toward rearmament, or a neutralist position, have been modifying their tune. They recognize that, for the time being, the only real possibility for rebuilding Germany's strength lies in cooperation with present plans for the defense of the West. And they are anxious to get on the bandwagon now to assure themselves a role in the shaping of German's military might later.

Because of the prestige they have acquired in Germany through the apparent "rightness" of their analysis of the international situation, because of the truly dramatic success of nationalist campaigns on behalf of war criminals and to wash out war guilt, because today they can play the role of being more German nationalist and anti-Allied occupation than anyone else, because they pose as vigorous anti-Communists even though they are really allied with Communism, in many specific instances, in method and in attitude — for all these reasons the stock of the neo-nazi and nationalist forces in Germany has continued to rise significantly in the past year.

Still another dangerous situation has been exposed in the West German Foreign Office where, according to a study made public by the conservative Bavarian Radio, the proportion of members of the Nazi Party in top positions is today *actually higher than the proportion during the Nazi regime*.

Until March, 1952, protests against the renazification of the German Foreign Office generally emanated either from dedicated fighters against nazism or from leftists whose sharpshooting could be blamed on their partisan opposition to the Adenauer government. But on March 17, 1952, people who ordinarily do not pay much heed to anti-Nazis sat up and took notice. The reason was a broadcast by the conservative Bavarian Radio (Bayrischer Rundfunk).

Four speakers sent statements such as the following over the air waves into hundreds of thousands of German houses: ". . . only now are we beginning to learn that the Foreign Office is a stronghold of former flunkies of the Third Reich . . ." After outlining in dramatic fashion the Foreign Office role in the April, 1941 Mannsee Conference, which suggested as the "final solution" of the Jewish problem the killing of all Jews, and after tracing the participation in such extermination measures of the various divisions and branches of the Foreign Office, the first speaker emphasized:

"Whether the officials concerned are responsible under criminal law is a secondary consideration. . . . One principle we must, however, postulate: any official who, because of the nature of his functions, must have known of these misdeeds . . . is no longer suited for a position in the foreign service. And we must demand that everyone must be removed from public office if there is documentary evidence of his participation in these misdeeds . . ."

Next, the attempts to whitewash the Foreign Office were exposed, and a few individual cases described. Among them is Counsellor of Legation Heribert Von Stempel, who as First Secretary of the German Embassy in Washington financed Nazi propaganda in the United States in the early years of the war; and Gerhard Stahlberg, at present Consul General of the Federal Republic in San Francisco, who during the war was entrusted with the drafting of expert opinions on the legal aspects of introducing Hitler's anti-Jewish legislation into countries allied with Germany.

So far the broadcast, although certainly news to most listeners, only rehashed what was already known to those interested in the subject. Now, however, came an enumeration nothing short of sensational. The speaker criticized the Federal Government's claim, in the fall of 1951, that "only" 134 out of 383 Foreign Office officials had been members of the Nazi Party. Such figures were meaningless and deliberately misleading, the speaker observed. What was important, he emphasized, is the political background of the *key* officials, the branch and section chiefs. And he gave this startling breakdown:

Personnel Division. 19 key officials: 18 had served in the Nazi Foreign Office, and 14 were members of the Nazi Party.

Political Division. 10 key officials: every one had served in the Nazi Foreign Office, and every one was a member of the Nazi Party.

Division of Foreign Countries. 8 key officials: 6 had served in the Nazi Foreign Office and 5 were members of the Nazi Party.

Legal Division. 8 key officials: 6 had served in the Nazi Foreign Office, and 5 were members of the Nazi Party.

Commercial Division. 4 key officials: 3 were members of the Nazi Party.

Protocol Division. 3 key officials: 2 were members of the Nazi Party.

The announcer then gave the startling conclusion:

"Of the key officials, *approximately 85 percent are former Nazi Party members. In other words, the proportion of Nazi Party mem-*

bers in the present Foreign Office is now higher than it was during the Nazi regime."

The effect of this carefully prepared bombshell was then reinforced by a brief account of two especially disgraceful cases. Werner von Grundherr, at present German Ambassador to Greece, is the man responsible for planning the deportation of the Jews of Denmark, and is guilty of other crimes against humanity committed when he was head of the Scandinavian desk of the Nazi German Foreign Office. It was he, too, who channeled the first funds to Norway's Quisling. Werner von Bargen, at present employed in the Legal Division of Adenauer's Foreign Office with the rank of Ambassador, instigated the deportation from Belgium of the Eastern European Jews resident there when he was German Minister in Brussels during the war.

The concluding words of the broadcast were:

"Are such men of the Foreign Office the right people . . . to restore confidence in German policies . . .? How much longer?"

Events in Germany also have their positive side, revealing aspects that can give hope to democratic forces. The Federal and Land governments have taken steps against neo-nazi groups. The Federal government is seeking to outlaw the neo-nazi Socialist Reich Party. The German trade unions and the Social Democratic Party have engaged in a vigorous propaganda campaign denouncing the neo-nazis. Ernst Remer, titular head of the Socialist Reich Party, was put in jail for a few months and banned from speaking in some areas, and his party headquarters have been raided by the police. When another neo-nazi stalwart and member of the Federal Bundestag, known as Dr. Franz Richter, turned out to be a well-known ex-nazi, named Fritz Roesler, his parliamentary immunity was lifted and he was jailed.

The furor attendant on the come-back attempts of the notorious actor and movie-maker Veit Harlan (producer for Goebbels of "Jew Sues," a film intended to inflame German opinion against Jews) revealed the existence of liberal and democratic nuclei in West Germany, particularly among the student groups, which have not received much attention to date.

But, when the over-all balance is cast, it must be recognized that the nationalist and chauvinist elements on the German scene are definitely more vociferous than their opposition and are certainly on the political offensive at present.

The real testing ground for the future of neo-nazism, moreover, cannot be the Federal Courts, important as it is to bring the neo-nazis to justice



and welcome as is the action of the Bonn Government in this regard. The proving ground is the attitude of the German people. And it is here that democracy is steadily losing ground to neo-nazi *ideas*, if not to the neo-nazi *organizations*.

It was an original aim of the Allied victors in the last world war that Germany should be re-educated for democracy. Today, more urgently than ever, such education is imperative. As the Special European Study Mission of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives observed in its report last February:

"The task which the United States undertook when Germany was occupied at the termination of hostilities has not been completed. A democratic form of government has been established in West Germany. In spite of rather hopeful developments, democracy has not matured in many areas in German life, but it must be recognized that 6 years is a relatively short time to supplant the German authoritarian tradition. Democracy in German life needs to be further cultivated and encouraged as it is not yet firmly rooted. American responsibility for a continuing share in this process must not be abandoned. Too many of the German people still believe there was more good in nazism than bad. Too many ex-Nazis are still in important positions. A real danger is a spirit of apathy among the people as to what will be the political complexion of their country."

2. A New Nazi Philosophy Is Shaped

In one book, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler expressed his philosophy, his policies and his prejudices. The philosophy and "line" of Germany's neo-nazis is not yet so compactly or forthrightly presented. Rather, it appears in monthly installments in a German magazine now more than a year old, *Nation Europa*.

The themes propagated in this publication merit attention because they crop up in the programs and policies of various German veterans' organizations, in the position of certain German political parties, and among other groups. Moreover, since it expresses the position of the extreme radical right in Germany, *Nation Europa* serves as a convenient yardstick by which to judge the intensity of other nationalist elements and attitudes in Germany.

At the same time, *Nation Europa* is the leading and most influential publication of the "international-minded" neo-nazis, not only for Germany but for other countries as well. Its staff and contributors include leading fascists, collaborators, and nazi adherents from England, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, and other countries. *Nation Europa* is published in Coburg under the direction of one Arthur Erhardt and it has editorial offices in: Switzerland, headed by Dr. Hans Ochler of Zurich; Holland, under Paul van Tienen of Eindhoven; and in Sweden, under Dr. Per Engdahl of Malmo. In Italy, a sister magazine, called *Nazione Europa*, was established but collapsed after two issues had been published.

On the surface, this German pocket-sized monthly is devoted to a noble aim, the constitution of a single European nation; at first blush, this does not seem far removed from the unity goals of the Strasbourg Assembly, for example. Because the purpose of the editors of the magazine has seemed to be similar to other, honest plans for the unification of Europe, *Nation Europa* was able to acquire the services of, or to quote, many persons of repute. The early numbers of the magazine abound with such well-known names as Jose Ortega y Gasset, Paul Reynaud, Arnold J. Toynbee, Andre Phillip, B. H. Liddell Hart, and others. In one issue, *Nation Europa* has a two-page article credited to General Eisenhower — an excerpt from one of his speeches on the need for European unity.

There is evidence that persons whose material and reputations are thus used know nothing about it. Alain Clement, correspondent in Germany of a leading French newspaper, *Le Monde*, was astonished to find excerpts from his material used in *Nation Europa* in such a way as to pervert his views. He insisted, as is permitted under German press law, that *Nation Europa* publish a letter from him excoriating the magazine's tendencies and tactics. For the most part, however, the magazine can probably count on the fact that its well-known contributors do not know their material is being used, or have little idea of the purposes for which it is used.

From the original welter of well-known names, however, a number of regular contributors began to emerge whose writings represent the true neo-nazi complexion of the magazine. Typical contributors are Per Engdahl, head of the Swedish neo-nazi party; Sir Oswald Mosley, black-shirted British imitation of Mussolini; Maurice Bardeche, leading French collaborationist and notorious anti-Semite; Karl Heinz Priester, organizer of the international wing of neo-nazism; Hans Grimm, well-known apologist for the Hitler regime; and the widow von Ribbentrop.

Many of those who write for the magazine are known, moreover, for their attendance at the international neo-nazi conference held in May, 1951, in Malmo, Sweden. It is only natural, therefore, that the themes of the magazine should be similar to those rather vague principles announced at the Malmo conference. The difference is that here the neo-nazi line is expressed more clearly and in greater detail. To a certain extent, *Nation Europa* is still in a state of flux: sometimes a contradictory thesis will appear, sometimes an original stand will be modified, as if the editors were not yet sure as to the best or most expeditious policy to be followed.

It is fair to say that what we are watching in *Nation Europa* is the gradual shaping, clarification, and sharpening of a neo-nazi philosophy being manufactured to suit the conditions of the post-war world and to promote Hitler-like ideas and programs under a guise more likely to make progress in present-day circumstances.

The Aims of Neo-Nazism as Described in "Nation Europa"

What are the themes of *Nation Europa* and the aims of the men who have founded this magazine?

Nation Europa considers itself as "a forum of young voices for the renovation of Europe"; as being based on the "contributions of responsible

heralds of the German and the European spirit"; as helping to "clarify political, economic and military problems of the future Europe" but, it asserts, without being subject to any political party influence; as fighting "against the cynical 'Without Me' philosophy"; and it calls itself a German publication, "the advocate of the justified demands of our people."

Seeking, at first, the prestige that comes from the use of arguments under famous names, *Nation Europa* cited the Toynbee theory that: "National states, which we have taken for granted, will begin to appear as luxuries which the people of Europe could afford for only short periods. We are in the midst of a long struggle for the Western way of life. . . . If the West continues to adhere to the principles of national sovereignty, we will lose the cold war. Either we subordinate, or we lose."

Immediately, however, *Nation Europa* equates the Western way of life with German ways, and more specifically with nazi concepts. Thus one writer insists that "with the defeat of Germany, the entire European culture is gone." It was to maintain this German, Western culture, he claims, that "volunteers of almost all European nations fought on our side, because they knew it was not a question of Germany, but of a world, their world."

These themes are combined and thrown into sharper focus by the nazi apologist Hans Grimm. In a declaration entitled, "My European Credo," he declares that we must get away from narrow nationalist and artificial state boundaries through a conscious meeting of the cultures of the various ethnic groups in Europe. "This was the concept," he affirms, "that brought the Spanish, the Dutch, the Walloons and other groups into the SS" — and he offers this Hitlerian organization as a model for European cooperation.

While they advocate the disappearance of the limited, national state, neo-nazi writers insist on the retention of the idea of nationalism. Maurice Bardeche, a Frenchman, is probably the most potent and forceful of the writers of *Nation Europa*. Nationalism, he emphasizes, is still the soundest idea against communism. "With regard to spiritual defense," he writes, "Europe is badly protected. In all countries Communist treason can be organized without hindrance, and nowhere is it energetically fought. The popular front governments of today are not ready or do not dare to take the offensive against Communism . . . only national European governments were able to overwhelm Bolshevism, spiritually and physically."

Certainly, according to the neo-nazis, democracy is not the answer, cannot be the inspiration for a new, united Europe. "Democracy in Europe is played out," cries Bardeche. "It no longer stirs men's souls to sacrifice.

And the manner in which it has been represented in all countries since 1945, the hypocrisy of its declarations and the cruelty of its mechanisms have only heightened the aversion to it."

Neo-Nazi Anti-Semitism and Attacks upon the United States

Attacks upon democracy as a system of government and upon the United States in particular are a constant feature of *Nation Europa*. Anti-Semitism is brought into play as well.

One article claims that: ~~"All mistakes since 1945 are due to the pseudo-democratic policies of Roosevelt and his advisers, who drove their country into a war that had nothing to do with U.S. interests."~~ Another speaks of "the United States, with its mixture of immaturity and decomposition." Still another consists of excerpts from an article written by the Canadian Bruce Hutchinson for the *Saturday Evening Post*. The Hutchinson piece dealt with American attitudes and shortcomings that irritate Canadians; but, though done caustically, it did assume the fundamental friendship between Canadians and U.S. citizens. In *Nation Europa*, the excerpts all deal with American faults.

Attacks on the United States are sometimes combined with open anti-Semitism. Up to now, it should be pointed out, open anti-Semitism has been rare in publications or public statements issued in post-war Germany. Almost always, anti-Semitism has been covert, implied, suggested. *Nation Europa's* Hans Grimm takes no such pains. He declares that everything was fine in the United States when Germans like Carl Schurz and Anglo-Saxons made up the bulk of immigrants into the U.S. And "then came the Jews in 1890," who changed the structure of the United States.

"Due to this change of structure," Grimm asserts, "there was a complete misunderstanding in the U.S. as to what happened and had to happen in Europe, and in the center of Europe. There was no recognition of the significance of the possibility of driving Stalin behind the Urals." To this change of structure, too, the author ascribes differences between the Germans and the U.S. administration in Germany.

Another anti-Semitic concept propagated in *Nation Europa* is that "the Jews got their vengeance through the Nuremberg trials . . . an injustice that will shout through the centuries."

Attacks on the United States, on Jews and on others, moreover, help in the fabrication of a basic theorem of the neo-nazis, that what happened in

the world during the past two decades was not the fault of Germany but of forces and powers outside of Germany. The search for someone, for something to blame is almost frenetic; but no great theme of apologia such as the "stab in the back" principle, or the idea that the Versailles treaty was responsible for all of Germany's troubles, has yet been successfully built up.

Neo-Nazis Seek a Europe Ruled by their "Elite"

While satisfying its readers that they, as Germans, are not to blame for any wartime or post-war difficulties, *Nation Europa* reveals the kind of brave new world it advocates. The ideas and quotations assembled below come from several authors in *Nation Europa* and represent the dominant chords the magazine plays.

Europe is to be rebuilt as a single nation. But it is a pre-requisite condition for the creation of the State of Europe that the present, smaller states shall be taken over "by the truly nationalist forces that alone have really struggled against Communism," and democracy was not one of these forces, asserts *Nation Europa*.

"We do not believe in conferences of statesmen appointed by governmental parties." Europe can be rebuilt only by the rebirth of a new aristocracy. "The masses are only the primordial material of every human society, the soil. . . . The jungle prevails so long as the creative few do not separate themselves from the mass and subordinate the mass to the laws of creative culture." And: "We are against the facade of democracy, justice and the churches." Europe can be saved only by Europeans, and it can escape the danger of being bolshevized or Americanized by forming itself as a third force, a balancing factor.

Germany must have full equality, and the "victor policy" must be dropped, *Nation Europa* affirms. The formation of a European Assembly constitutes progress, but the unchanged arrangement of membership according to victor and conquered dooms this effort. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is also bound to fail, for it is not centered in Europe and does not take into consideration that Germany is the true heart of Europe. Those European countries which belong are, in effect, defense outposts for the United States.

The "victor policy" must be eliminated, too, insofar as such "travesties" as the Nuremberg trials are concerned. The "honor" of the German soldier



must be redeemed, the Landsberg criminals should have been released, and those still in jail "for so-called war crimes" should also be set free, says the magazine.

In contradistinction to this "victor policy," it declares, a number of groups — as, for example, the emigrants from Eastern and Southeastern Europe (i.e., the Volksdeutsche) — are determined to form a constructive organization of European forces. "As long as these elements are excluded from the formation of the European destiny, it is not possible to coordinate the economic and cultural forces which are necessary to create a platform for the European Nation."

"No mass movement is wanted at the beginning, but we seek those who, spiritually, are looking for the same road. Working groups are being formed in Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and France. In other countries they are being hindered in the carrying out of their aims by pseudo-democratic nationalist governments," the magazine states.

"We are deeply anchored in Europe. Our culture is supreme. Our traditions impose a greater duty. Our source of life is more vigorous than that of other powers," cries *Nation Europa*.

The Neo-Nazi Concept of German-Led Europe as the "Third Force" of World Politics

Although it is vociferously anti-Communist, the neo-nazi movement draws a very sharp line indeed where it stops in its fight against Communism. Eliminate all Communists on the home front. (Incidentally, not just Communists but all liberal and truly democratic forces as well.) Battle the Communists ideologically. But "as determined as our struggle against Communism must be our refusal of all American attempts to use us in a war against the USSR. The European bloc for which we are aiming will be free of prejudices against Russians. It is not our duty to condemn the Soviet system. We must protect ourselves against Russian imperialism. But for the rest, we are duty bound to neutrality." This is the credo of *Nation Europa*.

Only a sufficiently large Wehrmacht can ensure Germany the opportunity to preserve genuine neutrality, *Nation Europa* declares. It opposes the *Ohne Mich* — the "Without Me" — sentiment of many Germans who desire no part of the rearming of Germany. The construction of a strong Wehrmacht is clearly part of the neo-nazi concept of the rebuilding of a pow-

erful Germany. And this, too, as has already been indicated, forms part of the central core, the heart of neo-nazi thinking — that Europe, under German leadership, must be reconstructed as the third force between the United States and the Soviet Union, the force that can play the decisive role in modern history.

What should this third force comprise? The answer comes most clearly from a French paper, *La Victoire*, which represents the neo-nazi international in France. The third force should include the independent European confederation, Africa, and Latin America. *La Victoire* points out: "Latin America has already proposed joining an enterprise of this magnitude. Some months ago General Peron purposely formulated a very similar program when he proposed that France, Italy, and Spain take the lead in a Latin Union. That part of South America which accepts, more or less, the directives of Argentina would thus be encouraged in its desire for independence from its neighbor of the North."

In their attitude toward Africa the neo-nazi movements show a strange blindness to the colonial movements for independence that have gained so much force since the end of the war. Africa (and Asia to a lesser extent) are seen in terms of what use they can be to the European nation. One author in *Nation Europa* sees in Africa the key to the solution of Europe's economic problems. Another, in the Italian *Nazione Europa*, thinks that Asia can still serve as fertile ground for the economic enrichment of Europe. Henri Bonifacio, head of the Comite National Francais, French wing of the neo-nazi group, blithely states that the cooperation of all Africa is assured the Third Force from the moment that France and Great Britain are an integral part of it; he completely ignores the difficulties both these powers face in Africa. For the Italian neo-fascists the Allied powers perpetrated a great crime against humanity when they took away Italy's colonies; the West really did not understand Italy's mission as a civilizing force and as a representative of the true Western culture.

For *Nation Europa* the correct relationship between the white men and the black men in Africa has been already defined — by Daniel F. Malan, racist prime minister of the Union of South Africa. His "apartheid" policy and its recent extension are "serious changes to strengthen the position of the white man in this important area," writes one author. Another, from South Africa itself, exclaims that "our way is the right way" to resolve problems between whites and blacks, and emphasizes that the United States is hypocritical on this subject.

The Internal Policies of a Neo-Nazi Europe

While the foreign and international policies of the neo-nazis are laid down with a fair amount of clarity, the internal workings of the neo-nazi Utopia get much less attention. What the neo-nazis are against, internally, is easy enough to see; what they are for, what policies they specifically intend to follow, is much vaguer. In this area, indeed, one finds more important indications in the sister publication of *Nation Europa*, the Italian *Nazione Europa*, or in the French publication, *La Victoire*.

Priester, writing in the German monthly, casually and briefly remarks that the central government of the European Nation will deal with the military, economic and defense problems of this new state. Abel Bonnard, education minister under the Vichy regime, writing in the Italian magazine, says that: "The people want to be delivered not only from wars but, also, from politics." Nonetheless, Bonnard concedes, it is indispensable to give the people, "in a manner more or less fictional or real," the feeling that they are participating in some way in the functioning of the government which rules them. The method should be, thinks Bonnard, "to consult the people without disturbing them, either concerning very precise local questions . . . or on very simple general questions." The "Yes or No" plebiscites of totalitarian regimes, it should be noted, would fit very well with the Bonnard concept. Votes for women? Bonnard gallantly, but firmly, says no, since this would "insult" them.

For the rest, insofar as the internal workings of the new European Nation are concerned, one finds only the occasional repetition of some of the principles laid down by the neo-nazi congress at Malmo, principles that seem closest to the corporate state established by Mussolini. In this state, the neo-nazis assert, the "economic direction of the modern collectivity cannot be abandoned to representatives of artificial groupings, as is the practice in liberal states, but in technically qualified, responsible persons, designated by natural and professional communities. . . . The modern professional community is the union: the union of the working men, the union of the producers." Since unionism must become a-political the moment it is given a public function, according to the neo-nazis, there will no longer be any need for several unions. Several unions can only exist where there are ideological differences — and under the new system this is not possible. The one union will become the means for the distribution of social production, and major questions will be submitted to popular referendum or plebiscite.

The parallels between the ideas of the protagonists of *Nation Europa* and the ideology of Hitler and Mussolini do not need to be underscored. That these parallels are no accident is obvious when one considers the history of the men who are the leading spirits of the neo-nazi movement. The anti-U.S. aspects of this movement are a striking feature of this neo-nazism, though there is a tendency among many not to notice it at present, when the neo-nazis are among those who shout loudest about the Communist menace.



3. The Strength of Neo-Nazi Ideas in Germany Today

The crucial question for Germany and the future of democracy in that country is: How much strength do neo-nazi ideas have today?

Probably the best question yet formulated to measure the views on Nazism held by the man on the street in Germany is:

“Everything considered, was there more good in the ideas of National Socialism than bad?”

Post-war public opinion polls sponsored by the U.S. have recorded a growing trend to the affirmative in answering this key question. Moreover, though the latest figures have not been released, it is known that the curve of replies avowing adherence to the principles of National Socialism has risen more sharply recently, after almost six years of occupation by democratic powers, than heretofore.

Another important U.S. poll asked: “What would be your attitude in case a nazi party or one like it should come to power in Germany?” It revealed a dismal picture: only one German in five would oppose the coming to power of a new nazi group:

20 percent said they would do everything possible to prevent it;

13 percent said they would like to see it happen, or would give such a movement support;

2.3 percent said they would not care; and

30 percent said they would not like to see it happen, but would do nothing to prevent it.

Further, 14 percent expressed no opinion. Among Germans, who are not yet accustomed to poll-taking as a device of measuring opinion and hence probably are not confident that their replies will be kept confidential, it is fair to assume that a great part of this 14 percent either favors the nazis or, at the least, would not care if they returned to power.

One can only agree with U.S. High Commissioner McCloy, who said when he released these figures in an address to the students of Freiburg University in January, 1952: “It is alarming that so great a proportion of the German population is disinterested in the political structure of the

country . . . Too few Germans show themselves disposed to oppose extremist political movements."

German Feelings on War Guilt

A related key query as to how Germans feel about National Socialism and their own relation to it deals with that much-discussed subject, war guilt. The creation of an apologia concerning German war guilt, we have seen, is one of the constant pursuits of *Nation Europa*. To make the issue as simple as possible, U.S. polls posed the war guilt question in this way:

"Assume that three individuals are talking about the war and about everything Germany did during the Third Reich. With whom of these three do you agree?

"*Herr Mueller* says: 'Each German bears a guilt for Germany's actions during the period of the Third Reich, and everyone should acknowledge this guilt.'

"*Herr Schmidt* says: 'Not every German needs to feel guilty, but each one should feel the responsibility to rectify, insofar as possible, the wrongs which Germany committed during the Third Reich.'

"*Herr Schulz* says: 'Germans in general need feel neither guilt nor responsibility for rectifying any wrongs. Only those who really committed crimes are guilty as well as responsible.'"

The results: Only 4 percent of those polled agreed with Herr Mueller; 21 percent with Herr Schmidt; 12 percent had no opinion or answer — and 63 percent thought that "*Germans in general need feel neither guilt nor responsibility for rectifying any wrongs.*"

For Jews, a question of particular interest is the strength of anti-Semitism in Germany today. Among the 48 million Germans in the Federal Republic of West Germany today, there live some 15,000 Jews who, it can be assumed, want to remain permanently; they constitute less than three hundredths of one percent of the total West German population. In addition, there are some 7,500 DPs who are seeking to leave.

A cross-section of the German public was asked, as a test question:

"Would you prefer that the Jews still living in Germany should remain and make their homes here, or would you prefer them to emigrate?"

A significant plurality, 37 percent, said they did not care one way or the other, and 10 percent more had no opinion. Of those who did express

a definite opinion, however, 27 percent wanted the Jews to go and 26 percent wanted them to stay.

A similar question designed to test anti-Semitism was:

“Do you believe that the Jews themselves are partly responsible for what happened to them during the Third Reich?”

To this one German in five (21 percent) answered, yes. The reasons given were that Jews engaged in unfair business practices, pushed themselves into key positions, carried on agitation against the Third Reich, their manners and behavior were offensive, or they avoided physical labor. Anti-Semitism directed against German Jews, it should be remarked, was shown to be only a little less fierce than that directed against DPs.

The neo-nazis and the writers for *Nation Europa* have, these opinion polls show, a fertile field in which to operate.

4. The Return of the Military Men

In view of the recent developments with regard to the rearming of Germany, it is not surprising that the stock of the former military men in Germany should be rising sharply. At present the rise in influence of the military is being expressed, primarily, through the mushrooming of German veterans' organizations of all kinds. The recent amazing growth of these groups, and their present efforts to coalesce, represent, however, only one facet of the many-sided advances that the military men of Germany have been making since early in 1949.

When de-militarization was emphasized in Germany, these men would meet in the neighborhood cafe over a glass of beer, simply, they claimed, to discuss some common problems. Conveniently forgetting the participation of the military in the Hitler drive for world domination, they felt maligned, misunderstood and deprived of their rights; so they met essentially to give mutual comfort and to discuss what they could do to better their plight. Cut off from their pensions, unfit for any other occupation but soldiering (many of the officer class having lost their properties as a result of the political shifts of territory after the war), they came together to see what welfare provisions they could wring from the German state.

Their primary welfare aims were: restoration of the pensions and retirement rights of the officers and officials of the German Wehrmacht, to obtain a lump-sum payment for the years during which they were not paid, and to regain their status as Beamten (civil servants) or, if possible, to be incorporated into the new German civil service.

Though the veterans insisted that their demands had nothing to do with politics, the question of meeting their demands soon became inextricably involved with a number of political and moral issues of importance in post-war Germany. For rehabilitation came to mean not just welfare improvements but *moral* rehabilitation as well. It meant the re-justification of the position of the Wehrmacht and the military men in the eyes of the German public. It meant that in Germany and elsewhere the concepts behind the Nuremberg trials, the convictions for the Malmedy slayings, the ideals that had cast German war criminals into Landsberg, Werl, Spandau, and

other prisons — all these would have to be thoroughly discredited if the Wehrmacht was to be considered clear of guilt and complicity in the crimes of World War II.

The first steps toward this rehabilitation took the form of a spate of books, articles, memoirs and analyses by German military men, all explaining, demonstrating and “proving” conclusively that it was not the Wehrmacht that lost the war for Germany, but, rather, the Austrian corporal with the funny mustache or the politicians.

By 1950 a third demand started to become clear, in addition to the search for welfare and for honor. This was the feeling that it would be desirable to assure the influence of the Wehrmacht on future developments in Germany. German ex-generals, predicting that Germany’s military participation would soon be sought, argued that the price of German aid should be high: full German equality in the military organization of the West, with the German Army subject to German command only.

The Successes of the Military in the Past Two Years

In two years the German military have gained a large part of their original objective and are apparently on the way to gaining more. With regard to welfare, a law was passed last fall by the German Bundestag that grants pensions to former professional soldiers. Generals and their widows do particularly well under this law.

The rehabilitation of the German soldier’s “honor” has made terrific strides. The campaign to release the Landsberg prisoners in 1951, the various clemency actions taken by the occupation authorities toward war criminals, and the adoption by virtually every German political party of the plank that war criminals should be released, have all been important stages in the redemption of the soldier’s “honor.” Internally, the German public has been convinced almost entirely that not only should the few remaining war criminals be released, but, also, that they have suffered considerable injustice. This was reflected recently in the Bonn parliament, which laid down as a condition for German participation in Western defense that provision be made to pardon the handful of war criminals still in jail. Internationally, the soldiers’ campaign was crowned with success when Chancellor Adenauer returned from meetings in London last February with an Allied agreement to establish a special court to review the sentences

of the remaining war criminals. There is little doubt but that almost all of them will benefit as a result.

It is not yet easy to measure how much the German military men influence German policies today, or how much influence they will have in determining Germany's future. What is evident, however, as will be shown later, is that more and more military men are cropping up in positions of importance. Committed as it is to the re-creation of a German Army, the Federal Government of Bonn has, of course, done business with certain German military men; these soldiers have influence, even if they are not in seats of power. Chancellor Adenauer recently admitted, for example, that he has been employing former General Heusinger as a military adviser since 1948, or before the West German Federal Republic even came into being. There have been meetings between Kurt Schumacher, head of the Social Democratic Party, and the chiefs of various veterans' groups, even though the SPD has been against German rearmament. Other political parties are actively canvassing among veterans' groups. The effect of the military on German policy should become clearer once a defense ministry and general staff are openly established by Bonn — these are not too far off.

It should be noted, also, that the West has gone very far toward meeting the price of German participation in defense. The French concept of small-size German units scattered through a European army has gone by the board. German soldiers will be under the orders of German officers.

The Present Aims of the Veterans' Groups

With the original objectives of the German military largely achieved, what are their present aims?

There are three major trends visible today.

1. The effort is being made to merge all soldiers or veterans into a single organization, in recognition of the tremendous psychological and political force such a mass could wield.
2. There is a drive to get the so-called Kyffhaeuser assets back into the hands of a veterans' organization. The Kyffhaeuser bund was the pre-war veterans' organization; a group claiming to be its successor has been established and is asking for the return of these assets. Now blocked, these assets amount to some 22 million marks, it is reported; according to the *Manchester Guardian*, these marks were not devaluated during the 1948

currency reform. If the veterans' groups acquire them they will have ample funds for playing a political game, should they decide to do so.

3. A vigorous attempt is now going on to achieve the rehabilitation and retrieve the "honor" of the SS and SA troops, now that the campaign in favor of the regular army troops has met with such success.

To evaluate the possibilities of success for these objectives, it is necessary to examine the strength, potentialities and present role of the existing veterans' groups.

Categories of Military Men and What They Believe

There still exists in Germany a law of the Allied Control Council, Law Number 16, which prohibits the founding of veterans' or of military organizations. A few years ago the effect of this law was to make veterans' groups adopt all sorts of circumlocutions to describe themselves and to carry out their activities. Today, the law is simply considered a dead letter.

During the past year, when veterans' groups have become more than ever an accepted part of the German scene, those organizations have sprouted up everywhere. One Bundestag deputy has estimated that there are more than 600 of them. They are said to have well over 300,000 members. If these could be unified in one organization, as veteran leaders now hope and plan, such a group would be one of the largest mass organizations in the Federal Republic, with probably a good degree of discipline.

For many of the three millions from West Germany who served in the Reich's armed forces, the various veterans' groups undoubtedly hold some attraction, whether for welfare, prestige, or other reasons. But the men who make up the backbone of these organizations can, roughly, be divided into three categories, according to the excellent German monthly, the *Frankfurter Hefte*. These categories are: the group of active Prussian officers; the "managers" group; and the "declassified," those who lost their standing in German society when the army fell apart.

The first group includes those who seek and long for a world that can probably never return, where a high-Prussian officer caste can again be in a class by itself, acknowledged as the founder and true support of the modern Germany their Prussian ancestors forged under Bismarck. In their effort to put their humpty-dumpty world together again, they take solace in the "eternal laws of German soldiers"; are hurt by and brood about what they consider the defections of the men of July 20th, the mili-

tary who tried to assassinate Hitler; and, generally, dig ostrich-like into the past. Many of them entertain monarchist dreams but they would probably support a nationalist, bourgeois, German republic if they were given some of their privileges again.

Those of the second group, the so-called managers, are more modern and elastic. General Manteuffel can be regarded as a typical example of a product of the old-time German military who has recognized that times have changed. They are the kind of leaders who happen to have chosen soldiering as a profession, but could have as readily chosen industry or politics as their field. They feel that democracy offers them plenty of elbow-room and opportunity for leadership, so they are willing to go along with democratic forms without really operating democratically. They represent a synthesis of civilian and soldier, and seem to have pro-Western leanings; but, the *Frankfurter Hefte* warns, they can be especially dangerous, for a "perfect political opportunism may be hidden" behind the front they now present.

If the first group wants caste and hierarchy re-established, the second places its emphasis on individualism and efficiency. It feels no need to make any decisions on "the legality and rights to power of those in power."

The third group consists mainly of run-of-the-mill professional officers and non-commissioned officers. They see a better life for themselves in the army, or in an army-style life. Many are social failures, who are marked by their military past. Often, they are primitive-minded enough to take fascist songs and slogans literally. They are resentful, and feel themselves unjustly de-classed. This is an "influenceable" group, it is felt.

The Important Veterans' Groups and Their Attempts to Unite

The list of veterans' organizations being a long one, only some of the more important groups, and their attitudes, can be outlined here.

1. The Verband Deutscher Soldaten-Bund der Berufssoldaten.

The VDS, or League of German Soldiers, as this group is commonly known, is, at present, probably the largest of the veterans' groups and is itself a consolidation of several organizations. Discussions concerning the founding of a unified organization of veterans' groups really began in the summer of 1951. In September, a meeting was held in Bonn at which representatives of many of the major bodies were present, including among others, the *Bund der versorgungsberechtigten ehemaligen deutschen Wehr-*



machts-Angehörigen, the most active veterans' group, later renamed the *Deutscher Soldatenbund*; the *Schutzbund Ehemaliger Deutscher Soldaten* (the professional soldiers group); the *Bruderschaft* (Brotherhood); the *Stahlhelm* (Steel Helmet); several of the so-called *Traditionsverbände*, which comprise members of special units of divisions of the Wehrmacht.

The organization that was founded as a result of this September meeting, the VDS, claimed to speak for and act in the interests of what it called the "front-line" generation in Germany. Former General Friessner, once director of training in the Wehrmacht and commander of two armies on the Russian front, was elected first acting chairman, pending a final election of a Council of Elders.

Friessner's election represented a compromise between two schools of thought among the generals and officers who lead the veterans' groups in Germany: the "resisters" who approved of, or supported, the July 20th plot against Hitler, and the so-called loyalists, who boast of having kept their oath of allegiance to Hitler. Since Friessner had not been a resister nor what the generals considered a fanatical nazi type, it was felt he could reconcile both groups. To a certain extent Friessner represents the first, or Prussian, category of generals described above.

Almost immediately, however, he proved himself hopelessly inept. In a speech before the Foreign Press Association at Bonn on September 21, 1951, he called the July 20th resisters "traitors," holding that their plot had been an "attempt to murder the Supreme Commander behind the front lines." He himself boasted of having loyally served the Emperor and the Weimar Republic as well as the Nazis, without having offended his conscience. Other statements by Friessner also aroused unfavorable reaction among various veterans' groups, and increased confusion and unrest. Finally, in December, Friessner was forced to resign.

The VDS, at its September, 1951 meeting formulated a program which reiterated the usual demands of the veterans with respect to pensions, jobs, housing, etc., and the customary pre-requisites for German cooperation in Western defense, such as the release of German war criminals and full equality for the Federal Republic and the German military in any defense set-up.

Friessner declared that the VDS did not intend to participate in party politics, but would merely give "political guidance." When, however, he stated his political beliefs more concretely, the resulting furor was enough to alarm not only the moderate elements among the ex-generals and ex-offi-

cers, but, also, to frighten some of the more democratic political parties in Germany, which until then had been watching the growth of the VDS with attitudes ranging from reserve to approval, as they cast an obvious eye on future elections and votes.

What frightened these more democratic elements, besides Friessner's attitude toward the July 20th resisters, were such statements as:

- German soldiers, and he himself, went into the last war with enthusiasm because they knew that it had been stirred up by the Poles, who had maltreated Germans on their side of the border.

- The principle of Soldiership should form the basis for a "voelkische" revival of Germany. During the chaos after defeat, inferior people had gotten to the top and were now in power. "But we soldiers must remember our accomplishments . . . and become the focal point for a new moral rearmament."

After such statements the Bonn government, which had been gingerly making some approaches to the VDS, it appears, also became cautious, and appealed to the VDS not to meddle in politics. At the time of Friessner's election, according to the Social Democratic Press Service, the PPP, Chancellor Adenauer had proposed to supply him with a political adviser and had suggested a prior discussion on a statement of VDS aims and program which Friessner should issue. Friessner, PPP reported, refused this offer.

Of the greatest influence in the VDS since Friessner has been deposed is former Admiral Gottfried Hansen and his deputy, Otto Mosbach.

2. *Kyffhaeserbund*.

A second veterans' group of importance, which is also striving to form a unified organization, is the *Kyffhaeuserbund*. In February, 1952 representatives from some 50 groups met in Wiesbaden under its aegis to discuss a merger, and the VDS sent observers. According to its own statements, the *Kyffhaeuserbund* has some 90,000 former members. The president of the organization is General Reinhardt. The present group claims to be the successor of the old organization of the same name. Under the nazi regime it was known as the *Reichskriegerbund*, and it was dissolved in 1943.

A large part of the *Kyffhaeuserbund's* efforts are devoted to getting back the 22 million non-devaluated, blocked marks representing the assets of the old organization. These efforts led to questions in the Bundestag by the Deutsche Party, whose spokesmen asked the government what measures it intended to take concerning these assets which, they said, had been devoted to social purposes.



Government representatives stated that should the conclusion be reached that the *Kyffhaeuser* was not a nazi organization, its successors must negotiate with the German Laender, since it was to them that the Allies had turned over control of the assets in question. The Federal government, however, would press for a uniform legal interpretation of this problem by the state governments, it was declared.

It is obvious that considerable progress has been made toward the aim of unifying the veterans' groups through these two bodies, the VDS and the *Kyffhaeuser*, despite the obstacles faced by the advocates of unity. Such obstacles, at present, include:

- The jockeying for leadership by various veterans' groups and among the generals and admirals who would like to head any overall body.
- The decision of some of the more important veterans' groups, such as the *Heimkehrerverband* (The Association of Returnees) and the *Verband der Kriegsbeschädigten* (The Association of War-Injured) not to join the VDS, at least for the present, though they usually send observers to meetings.

Up to now the VDS has accepted former SS men as individuals, but has discouraged their forming veterans' organizations within the VDS framework.

3. *The Bruderschaft.*

Whether the *Bruderschaft* (Brotherhood) is strong or weak, important or not, seems to be a matter of conjecture, even among qualified observers on the German scene. It is worth reporting that long before the other veterans' groups came to the public's attention, the *Bruderschaft* was receiving considerable publicity despite the fact that, theoretically, it was a group shrouded in mystery. Founded in 1948, it is an association of former Wehrmacht officers and Nazi functionaries.

The organization had two wings, one reported to be in favor of contacts with the East, the other with the West. Francke-Grieksch is the head of the former element, Beck Broichsitter of the latter. It has been asserted that the *Brotherhood* has connections with the *Deutsche Union*, one of the German rightist groups, and that General von Manteuffel has some association with it. As early as 1950 the *Brotherhood* was reported, in the *New York Times*, to be issuing plans for German rearmament or participation in a Western defense system, and 18 of its members, former Wehrmacht officers, were supposed to be in contact with Chancellor Adenauer to advise him on military matters.

The Francke-Grieksch, or Eastern, wing, is thoroughly imbued with the *Nation Europa* type of thinking; indeed, this attitude colors the entire organization to a certain extent.

According to its first "organizational letter," the primary political objective of the *Bruderschaft* was to solidify the anti-Social Democratic front. Though an ostensible reason for creation of the organization was to fight Communism, it paid very little attention to the Communists. Its leaders have always considered certain foreign affairs matters "above politics," and on these, therefore, they took the following stand:

- "Formalistic" democracy constitutes no defense for Western Europe which, administratively and militarily, must be better coordinated, according to the *Bruderschaft*. Germany, spiritually uplifted during a decade of suffering, constitutes an important cornerstone in the interests for the sake of Europe. Therefore, Europe must meet certain demands: independent Germany within its 1937 borders, a modern German Army under German leadership, and the rest of the gamut of the usual requests.

4. There are also groups with rather open Communist, or fellow-traveler connections. One such is the *Fuehrungsring ehemaliger Soldaten*, led by Munich's former General Schrank. This group signed an anti-rearmament proclamation by pro-Soviet groups in Uelzen. It is also connected with the extreme right, being supported by the *Reichsjugend* of the Socialist Reich Party.

In addition to the groups that make a general appeal, there are hundreds of veterans' organizations that have sprung up around membership in some particular army unit or division. These are the *Traditionsverbaende*.

This survey of the veterans' groups during the past year shows that mechanisms exist, and are growing stronger, whereby these organizations can unite for common purposes. Though there are differences among the various groups, almost all of them are drawn together by the basic areas of agreement that exist, such as the vindication of the honor of the German soldier and officer, the improvement of his material position, and the determination that an independent German Army under German leaders shall exist once more. Efforts to retrieve the fortunes of pre-war veterans' groups are also making headway.

We must now consider the third aim of veterans' groups in Germany — the rehabilitation of the SS.

Hitler's SS Veterans Campaign for Rehabilitation

By the summer of 1951 it was apparent that SS troops were forming small-cell veterans' units and that the SS had their representatives in the larger veterans' groups. Immediately after the war, it will be remembered, when all elements were trying to shift war crimes on to somebody else, the regular German soldiers sought to dissociate themselves from the SS which, including Hitler's special extermination forces, emerged from the war years with the blackest of reputations.

Even at present such attempts at differentiation are still significant. Thus the law which the German government passed in 1951 providing pensions for Wehrmacht soldiers specifically excluded the SS guards. And veterans' groups like the VDS adopted the policy of not permitting SS veterans to join the organization as units, though it was willing to accept them as individuals.

It was not until November, 1951, in Hamburg, that SS veterans' groups started to come out into the open on a noticeable scale. There had been a significant amount of groundwork done. In the first place, the force of the campaign for rehabilitation of the Wehrmacht was strong enough to give impetus to the move to bring the SS back into the bosom of the German family. Moreover, in an ever-increasing number of speeches, leaders of the other veterans' groups started to call for the vindication of the SS members; to some extent, of course, they thus hoped to swell their own ranks. Finally, the SS men were encouraged by the progress made by the other groups and felt that they, too, could become acceptable if they used the same tactics.

Essentially, the process of "cleaning up" the reputation and honor of the SS is now going through the same phases as the earlier campaign to rehabilitate the German soldier; and a similar favorable result can be expected.

Military Men in Government, Politics, Church and Industrial Circles

Military men have been regaining positions of importance in Germany. This does not mean that the military, as such, is taking over power again. It does mean that in the government, political parties, the churches, and industrial circles, men are obtaining prominence who, essentially, represent the military and army point of view that has made Germany, since 1870, the bane of the West's existence.

It was a logical consequence that, as part of its decision to participate in the defense of the West, the government should seek military advisers among the generals and colonels of the Wehrmacht. Bonn's Federal Security Office under Herr Theodor Blank has been doing this quietly and consistently.

The German Federal and Land police, and the frontier guards are known to be infested with former military men and nazis, some of them with very bad records, who were recruited on the basis that, after all, they had "experience" in this sort of work. One of the veterans' groups now merged in the VDS is reported to have played a special role in the selection and creation of the police and frontier forces. Chief of the Federal Frontier Control is former General Matzki.

The movement to reinstate the old Beamten (civil servants) in Germany in their former posts because they were "reliable" also gave an opportunity to many military men. Some, also, found posts with the occupation powers. Former General Erich Brandenberger, for example, is chief of the German labor units with the U.S. forces.

Virtually all the political parties in Germany, with the exception of the small Zentrum Party, have made approaches to the military and veterans' groups or have eagerly tried to enlist them as party members. Socialist leader Schumacher, it will be remembered, had a meeting last year with the then chief of the VDS, and the SPD has even contacted the SS groups. It is reported, also, that the circles around former General Holssbach, who was involved in the July 20th anti-Hitler plot, enjoys the confidence of the SPD. Adenauer tried to present the VDS with a political adviser and, when this failed, his party urged the veterans to stay out of politics. The Free German Party, a right-wing, nationalist element of the government coalition, has sought to adopt a particularly benevolent role toward the veterans' groups. The executive board of this party even sent circulars to all its Land district sections, requesting them to advise former officers to report to Bonn's defense department. When criticized in the press, the party replied that it had only wanted to assure "the recruiting of loyal forces who have proven themselves reliable in war and peace."

The strength of the extremist and neo-nazi parties is based on old soldiers, on officers and non-commissioned officers who have not been able to adjust to the post-war situation of Germany. Even the formation of these parties is military in structure.

In religious circles, the military have very close connections with the Protestant Church. This is to be expected since the Prussian Army and the

Protestant Church always used to be affiliated in their capacity as dual pillars supporting the German throne. Many professional officers studied theology after the war, and Church organizations frequently hired former officers. For example, former General Everbach is in the Evangelische Akademie. Even Pastor Niemoller, of the German Evangelical Church, who is opposed to German rearmament, has a former general, Bayerlein, as his private secretary.

Industrialists, too, employed former officers after the war, partly for social reasons and partly because they were acquainted with them through armament orders. Manteuffel, for instance, got a post with a large Rhenish firm. Other industrialists are drawn to the military because they are playing with ideas such as a German socialism, and think it wise to have officer-leader types on hand. One veterans' paper, the *Deutsche Soldatenzeitung*, is being financed by Rhenish Westphalian industrialists, according to one report.

The veterans' groups in Germany originally arose in response to certain needs similar to those that have led to the formation of veterans' organizations in democratic countries.

In the case of German soldiery, however, there are certain factors at play which do not affect veterans' groups in other lands — the drive to recoup their "honor," the memory of the almost over-riding influence that the military had in Germany, the psychological, unadmitted need to be cleansed of war guilt. These factors have led many organizations into political channels or have caused them to take a stand on political issues which, normally, are not subjects of veterans' concern except as individual citizens. There is a danger that these political considerations may become paramount among veterans' groups.

These groups, at present, do not form a cohesive, unified, disciplined whole. But when one remembers that, a few years ago, they were considered (and considered themselves) illegal, their recent progress is impressive, and their attempts to organize mechanisms of cooperation have been rather successful. There is, moreover, a potential of some three million men in West Germany who were under arms, even though, until now, the veterans' groups have not succeeded in attracting former civilian-soldiers in significant numbers.

5. Democratic Counter-Action

Neo-nazi gains during the past year have produced a democratic counter-action, albeit a reaction whose real strength and effectiveness have yet to be demonstrated.

The most important single step was taken by the Federal Government. At the end of last year, a German Federal Constitutional Court was finally established (in theory, it should have been set up earlier). This court has the right, under German law, to declare unconstitutional the existence of extremist parties whose purpose it is to overthrow the government. In November, 1951 the Federal Government asked that the Socialist Reich Party be declared unconstitutional, charging it with being the "successor organization" of the Nazi Party, aiming to impair the democratic system of the Federal Republic, defaming democratic parties, creating harmful legends concerning the July 20th plot to overthrow Hitler, threatening to adopt terrorist measures, and harming the reputation of the Federal Government.

One part of the Socialist Reich Party structure was outlawed by administrative act of the Federal Government in May, 1951. This was the SRP *Reichsfront*, an organization established on a paramilitary basis, ostensibly to "keep order" at SRP meetings but in reality as a new form of the old Hitler SA.

The court has not yet ruled on the legality of the SRP itself. According to the U.S. High Commissioner's Quarterly Report, however, "the preponderant German legal opinion holds that a possible ban of the SRP would permit its deputies in the Federal and state legislature to retain their mandates as independents, though not under the label of the SRP."

The leading SRP representative in the German parliament was an open neo-nazi known by the name Franz Richter. (Richter was also present, incidentally, at the neo-nazi international congress at Malmo in 1951, and generally has tried to act as a link between the SRP and the international neo-nazis.) In February, 1952, however, it was disclosed that Richter was hiding behind a false identity, and that he was, in reality, a former Nazi

functionary of some importance named Fritz Roesler. His parliamentary immunity was lifted and he was thrown into jail.

Not generally publicized, however, was the reaction of the SRP to Richter-Roesler's arrest. Said the SRP statement: "Franz Richter-Roesler has lived under a false name merely because of the legal emergency existing after 1945." Then, however, it stated what *would* be considered a "crime" on Roesler's part: "Should he have made false statements concerning his military activity [Einsatz] during the war, the SRP would expel him automatically." SRP co-chairman Count Westarp has already declared that the Richter-Roesler case has not caused any damage to the SRP and has probably made the former parliament member even more popular. He added that, indeed, the party expected to profit from the entire affair.

Other government action against the neo-nazis includes several steps.

- The titular head of the SRP, former Major General Ernst Remer, late in 1951 was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for statements in contempt of the Federal Government. The chief editor of the SRP weekly, *Deutsche Opposition*, Hans Kaps, has been sentenced to three months' imprisonment by a Hamburg court on a similar contempt charge.

- On January 31 of this year, the Federal Ministry of the Interior carried out sudden raids against the general, district and local headquarters of both the Socialist Reich Party and the Communist Party.

- The Land (State) government of Wuerttemberg-Baden issued a ban on all SRP meetings last August, but recently lifted it to permit SRP participation in the elections for the Constituent Assembly of the new German state composed of the former Laender of Baden, Wuerttemberg-Baden and Wuerttemberg-Hohenzollern.

- The Land of Bavaria has forbidden the appearance of SRP head, former General Remer, as a speaker at rallies, but he has managed to address small private groups and establish "cadre" groups for his party there.

- The Land of Bremen has forbidden an SRP concert which former nazi composer Herms Niel was to conduct. A previous concert arranged by the SRP for Niel proved to be a pure nazi-type demonstration.

- In Lower Saxony, where the SRP showed such surprising strength in May, 1951, the party has held some 20,000 meetings during the past two years, according to the newspaper *Der Mittag*. Local authorities managed to block only 160 of these meetings.

While bans may have had some effect in the past, they cannot be applied in the future, for the Federal Constitutional Court ruled in March that administrative banning of SRP meetings was an unconstitutional act. Encouraged by this victory, SRP co-chairman Westarp has announced that the party will now ask the court to rule on the legality of the Government's ban on the *Reichsfront*, the paramilitary arm of the SRP which was outlawed last summer.

On the propaganda front, it is probably the German trade unions and the Social Democratic Party that have waged the most energetic warfare against neo-nazis. Cartoon pamphlets have come out comparing SRP leaders to the Pied Piper of Hamelin, and showing the disastrous effects to be expected if the ordinary German is taken in again. The Socialists have put out a comprehensive booklet which summarizes the development of rightist extremism in Germany since 1945, the organization of the SRP, and its program. The booklet describes the relationship of the SRP with the Communist Party (the KPD) and with Soviet Zone authorities. This, it feels, is a most dangerous aspect of SRP activities. Black and yellow Socialist posters and leaflets shout that: "The Ghastly Face [Fratze] of Neo-Nazism Shocks the Civilized World." And there is an important vigorous and democratic press in Germany which pays close attention to the neo-nazis and to the veterans' groups.

The Dispute over Veit Harlan and His Films

German democratic and liberal elements other than trade unions and the Socialists attracted little attention until the notorious German actor and producer, Veit Harlan, tried to show his new picture, "Hanna Ammon." Harlan had produced the Goebbels propaganda film, "Jew Suess," which was deliberately made to provoke anti-Jewish feeling in Germany, and which other German producers and directors, incidentally, had refused to do. After the war, Harlan stayed out of the public eye until he was "rehabilitated." Judges in Hamburg acquitted him of "crimes against humanity" on the ground that though he was morally culpable, a denazification tribunal should deal with his case. The Supreme Court of the British Zone reversed the acquittal, but the Hamburg court nonetheless let him off. The three denazification tribunals declared that he was guilty but that, for technical reasons, this was a case not for the courts but for the public, which ought to ban his films.

Eric Lueth, Press Chief of the Hamburg government, recently called



for such a boycott, whereupon Harlan's attorneys had an injunction taken out against Lueth. Lueth's appeal for the right to seek a public boycott is now pending before the Federal Constitutional Court.

Last year Harlan produced a film entitled "Immortal Beloved." In half a dozen major cities democratic forces prevented this rather saccharine film story from being exhibited, but it was a box-office hit in the rest of Western Germany. By the end of 1951, Harlan seemed to have triumphed and democratic forces were thoroughly discouraged. Since then, however, the anti-Harlan movement has received fresh force, and has become the focus of nation-wide attention in West Germany. A number of factors have contributed to this resurgence of feeling against him.

Harlan's distributing company violated a gentleman's agreement, made in October, 1951, not to show "Immortal Beloved" in Munich. The picture had been withdrawn from a downtown theater there because of threatened riots. Last Christmas the distributors presented the picture in half a dozen small movie houses, calculating correctly that it would be difficult for anti-Harlanites to organize against the film at that time. This action incensed many decent people in Bavaria.

Harlan attracted attention again with his new sensational color film, "Hanna Ammon." At a number of universities, students and professors took up the cudgels against Harlan and his new film. A student protest meeting in the university town of Freiburg, broken up by the police, set off repercussions still being felt through all Germany. For many democratic groups, the Veit Harlan issue became a test case.

The Freiburg Incident

It was the Freiburg incident, however, which received the greatest publicity and focused attention on the willingness of certain student groups to fight for democratic causes.

Harlan's "Immortal Beloved" had been shown in Freiburg early in 1951, when it stimulated some protests which were generally ignored by the public. Ineffective protest resolutions were again issued in January, 1952, when it became known that the new Harlan film would be shown in Freiburg. When Harlan and his wife came to town for personal appearances, however, it seemed to galvanize the more democratic elements in the city.

Sporadically and individually some students began distributing anti-

Harlan leaflets in front of the movie houses. On January 15 there were disturbances in one of the theaters but, under strong police protection, the film continued to play to packed houses. On January 16, the student council of Freiburg University called for a protest rally.

Some 200 students rallied in front of the movie houses, distributing leaflets in orderly fashion and being careful not to block the movie entrances. They were soon subject to such insults and denunciations as: "You fellows ought to be shot"; "It's high time the nazis came back"; "Damned Jewish hirelings"; and "Who's paying you?"

A police officer demanded that the students disperse. When they pointed out that they were within their legal rights, a number of individuals in civilian clothes, spread through the area, whipped out rubber truncheons and began raining blows upon the demonstrators. The assailants, it later developed, were police officers in mufti. Uniformed police entered the melee and arrested the students. The police, it later turned out, could prefer no charges against the students.

That night the film was banned by South Baden's president and his minister of interior.

Student groups also took protest action against the showing of Harlan's film in the towns of Marburg, Gottingen and Munster. The activities of the police authorities and the anti-Semitic crowds in Freiburg brought a considerable number of protests from either student organizations, such as the German Catholic Students Association, professional groups, the executive committee of the Social Democratic Party, or from many prominent individual Germans. U.S. High Commissioner McCloy caused something of a sensation when, visiting Freiburg University on January 21, he declared that had he been a student and young enough he would himself have been an anti-Harlan demonstrator.

Virtually nothing has been done about the police brutality in Freiburg and, very likely, nothing will be done. Indeed, everywhere that students started to demonstrate against the Harlan films it soon became evident that strong groups of the population sympathized with Harlan or even seemed to regard the Harlan affair as a good opportunity to show anti-Jewish resentment. Nor should it be imagined that the students were wholeheartedly on the side of the anti-Harlan demonstrators by any means. The students of Erlangen University, just north of Nuremberg, voted by 500 to 20, at a debate in which Harlan himself participated, that they felt

themselves "morally obligated, for the sake of true democracy and justice for all, to absolve Harlan."

For the mass of the public, moreover, there was no problem as to whose side it espoused. They have flocked to see Harlan's productions. Of course, the question is complicated by the fact that many persons will go to see any film that is controversial or banned. But among those who helped many a theater set up new attendance records when it showed the Harlan pictures there were undoubtedly large numbers of Germans who felt that this was a test case of their sentiments on such issues as denazification, and who wanted to demonstrate their sympathy with Harlan.

While it is encouraging, therefore, to see the active appearance of democratic nuclei in Germany, and especially heartening to see that such groups exist among the students (traditionally a nationalist element in pre-war Germany), this feeling is balanced by the recognition that great sectors of the German public have not yet been penetrated by democratic sentiments, that post-war Allied aims to re-educate Germany have yet to show large scale results, and that an intensification of such educational work is more imperative than ever, now that Germany is about to become virtually independent.

The last word, perhaps, can best be left to a German newspaper, *Welt der Arbeit*, official weekly publication of the German trade unions, which recently declared:

"The conscience of the German people as a whole in the last few months has pretty much weakened with respect to former brown shirt leaders. . . . It would be ominous not to want to see the signs of the times. With the help of parties and groups which call themselves democratic, under the protection of the most liberal constitution of the world, the 'big ones' of the past regime are seeking to regain significant influence over Germany's destiny . . .

"All these elements are again waiting for their hour."